

# KRUEGER-SCOTT MANSION CULTURAL CENTER

CATHERINE J. LENIX-HOOKER • EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## **Victorian Mansion To Become African-American Cultural Center**

The twenty-five room Krueger Mansion is one of the few Victorian residential structures of major importance remaining in the City of Newark. It was built in 1888 by "Beer Baron" Gottfried Krueger at a cost of \$250,000 and is reminiscent of a German castle. A veritable palace on high ground, overlooking downtown Newark, the mansion was subsequently occupied by the Newark Valley of the Scottish Rite, who built a seven hundred seat auditorium that abuts the Mansion, and then by African-American entrepreneur Louise Scott, who is credited with having saved the Mansion from certain destruction.

The Mansion and its surrounding site is presently being restored to become a premier African-American facility for the study and interpretation of the visual and performing arts. The City of Newark has demonstrated its intent to support the restoration of the Mansion and the rehabilitation of the entire block through its bond initiatives and in 1995 the project will be seeking additional public and private grants to assist in both the rehabilitation of the building and the operation of the facility.

In 1990 Catherine J. Lenix-Hooker, then Deputy Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, was hired as the Executive Director for the Krueger-Scott Mansion Cultural Center. Over the past years, she has been successful in acquiring grants and donations to support the Mansion restoration, land acquisitions, and public programming for the project. Major funding has come from the City of Newark, the New Jersey Historic Trust, and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. In addition, she has acquired-product donations for paint, wall coverings, memorabilia from the families of Gottfried Krueger and Lousie Scott, and authentic Victorian furniture from a local merchant.

The exterior renovations are being performed by a team of restoration experts that include Kenneth A. Underwood, FAIA, historic architect from Grad Associates; Austin Helle Construction Co.; and Markota & Sons masonry company.

The original interior of the Mansion was decorated by a corps of artists and craftsman under the direction of Herman Schultz in the Empire, Louis XVI and Louis XIV styles. A bronze and glass dome cupola covers the intersection of the two main corridors. The dining room was finished in oak and embossed leather, the library in cherry and morocco, and the upstairs sitting rooms in rosewood and inlaid pearl.

"The interior of the Mansion will need skillful restoration especially the oak stair balustrade and the many and varied fireplaces. There are few contractors who are able to provide the specialized work or specific materials needed to restore the Mansion to its 1880s condition. It's a time consuming, arduous process. But it's necessary and I am committed to restoring this house to its original splendor. This community deserves nothing less," says Lenix-Hooker.

Once the initial phases of the rehabilitation are completed and the Mansion has been readied for occupancy, Lenix-Hooker envisions a building alive with activities including African-American traveling and permanent exhibitions; museum dedicated to Louise Scott; artists and scholars-in-residency programs that will train youngsters in art, theater, dance, and literature; Scott Joplin parlour concerts; community organizations meeting spaces; performing arts events; an oral history program covering the African-American's contribution to Newark from 19910-1970; and historical lectures and guided tours of the Mansion.

The Mansion is an historic landmark and is on both the National and the New Jersey State Registers of Historic Places. If you would like to be put on the mailing list of the Krueger-Scott Mansion Cultural Center send your name and address to KSMCC, 920 Broad Street, Room 204, Newark, NJ 07102.

